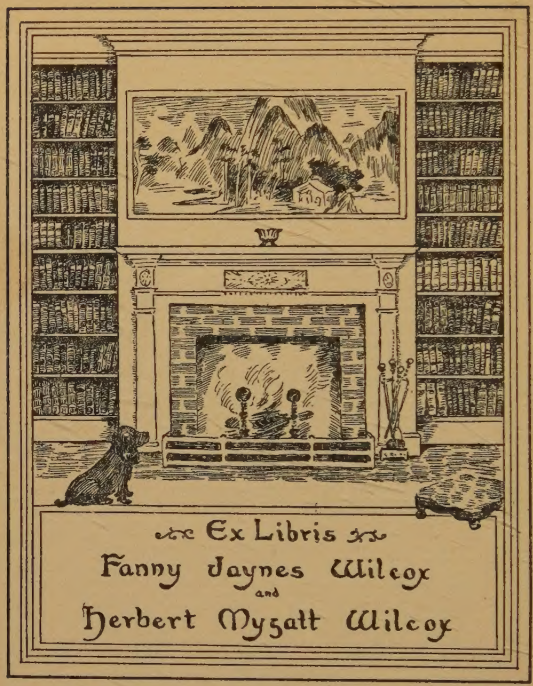
THE ETERNAL LIFE

HUGO MÜNSTERBERG



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BY

HUGO MÜNSTERBERG

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COME, dear friend, sit down here by the open fire. It was cold and penetrating out there at the burial; — come, warm your hands, and let us talk of the companion we have lost. How often he sat with me here through the long winter evenings, and brightened my dusky library with his genial humor and good cheer! We shall not hear his voice again. I cannot express how deeply I am stricken by this loss, — I know only that I shall never again sit here without grieving that our friend's life, with all its sweetness and inner beauty, was so short. Do you remember that summer morning when you met him

here for the first time? Who thought that the November day of final parting would come so soon? Will you not sit down and talk with me? Why do you hesitate?

Ah, I understand, — I see it all in your clouded eyes and brow. Your eyes say that though we are in perfect accord on every practical question, yet our ways part here. You do hope to see our friend again in the time to come. When the minister beside the open grave promised a happy meeting yonder, I saw you bend your head as if the preacher spoke the language of your heart. I thought I had mistaken you; now I see that I was right and that my words must have wounded you. I know you must recoil as if from an

atheist who, without creed or belief of his own, seeks to destroy your faith in immortality. You look on me as a man of science who cares for naught that he cannot see and touch and weigh and measure — to whom eternal life is an empty tale. Is it not strange what close friends two men can be who yet are strangers in their deepest thoughts?

But come — I cannot let you go now until you have heard my defense. I am neither skeptic nor atheist, and I believe in eternal life. — Before this wood fire has burned out, you shall know me better. We shall not convince each other, but we owe a better mutual understanding to the memory of our friend. It is not surprising that you mistook me for one of those who,

in the pride of modern science, have only ridicule, or, at best, indifference, for every thought of a beyond. All about us, indeed, we see the men with a scientific view of the world and the men with a religious view of the world in two sharply separated camps. The scientist may attend church, but his religion is an empty function; it does not penetrate his life. And the churchman may gain all knowledge, and yet the scientific view of the world does not shape his universe. It seems as if science and religion could no longer be harmonized. And yet, my friend, I feel that they belong together: the deepest truth of science and the most profound religion are compatible.

It is true I am a man of science. Here in this library it hardly needs to

be declared. The microscopes at the desk tell the tale, and every book on the shelves affirms it. It is my passion and my delight to throw my little energy into the search for the laws which control this universe of matter and the life of the mind. The laws of the physical and of the psychical world impress me daily more and more by their wonderful clearness and their majestic power. Science does not mean to me the answer to questions of curiosity ; it is to me not a mass of disconnected information, but the certainty that there is no change in this universe, no motion of an atom, and no sensation in a consciousness, which does not come and go absolutely in accordance with natural laws, — the certainty that nothing can exist out-

side of the gigantic mechanism of causes and effects. Necessity moves the stars in the sky, and necessity moves the emotions in my mind. No miracle can break these laws, can push a single molecule from its path, or create a sensation in a mind, when the body does not work, when the brain no longer functions.

I see by the compression of your lips, my friend, and the impatient play of your fingers that I am confessing just what you suspected. Does not — I read the question in your face — does not all this entail the admission that there is no God and no immortality, that the physical universe is the whole of reality, and that in the millions of years to come no mind will ever awake when once the body is the prey

of worms? But I did not say that this was my last word; you heard my first word only. Too many stop here, because they take the challenge for the fight, but you and I must go on.

Science! How easily is its great mission misunderstood! How often scored by its opponents for claims which it does not make, how often by its own friends pushed forward to a ground where it must fail altogether and disastrously! To honor science means to respect its limitations: science is not and cannot be, and ought never to try to be, an expression of ultimate reality. When science seeks to be a philosophy, it not only oversteps its rights, but weakens at the same time its own position. Everyone who feels a lack of inspiration in

this mass of dead material substances begins then to look out for small exceptions in the realm of nature, and rejoices in every case whereof science is still unable to explain the physical or mental facts; he hopes to find supernatural signs of a better reality in the gaps of the causal world. The belief in our freedom and responsibility and God's almightiness seems then to depend upon the shortcomings of the scientist, and must go in fear of every new scientific discovery. But science is then the first to suffer in this conflict, as the needs of the heart prove stronger than all the doctrines of the schools, and all the proud theories fall asunder when life demands its own. And yet, believe me, this conflict can never arise if the meaning

and purpose of science is rightly interpreted.

Science is an instrument constructed by human will in the service of human purposes. It is a valuable, reliable, and indispensable instrument; but it is, like any instrument, an artificial construction, which has meaning only in view of its purpose. In doing our life's work, in fulfilling our duties, we have to act, and our actions deal with the things that surround us. It is a chaos, that world of things, in which we cannot act if we do not bring order into it. I must know what the thing in my hand will do if I handle it; how it will change. If I bring it in contact with other things, will it move, or burn, or melt; will it change color or make a noise; will it hurt me, or will it feed

me; will it blossom, or will it explode? What we have to expect from the object, we call the effect; and that which we have in hand then becomes the cause. In this way the scientist connects the things of this chaotic world in an orderly system of causes and effects which follow one another; and, as he can do his work only if he takes for granted that the end can be reached, he considers the world of objects as a system in which everything must be understood as the effect of causes. The scientist thus cannot reach his goal save in shaping and moulding and transforming the whole world in thought till everything can be understood as a part of such a chain of causes and effects. It sounds surprising, and yet this postulated system is

the only universe which the scientist studies.

This universe is no longer the original experience ; the things of the world had to be changed over and over again till the human intellect could form a connected system out of the chaos. For the burning wood I see here, the chemist substitutes chemical molecules ; for the chair my hand touches, the physicist posits trillions of atoms ; for the movement of this spark in the fireplace, he calculates innumerable components ; for its red light, he uses ether waves that are dark ; and for the sound of my voice, air waves that are silent. Everywhere the scientist substitutes something else for the real experience, and yet he finds that only by such substitution can he determine

beforehand what will happen; only by such transformations of reality can he construct a system of causes and effects, and thus foresee the changes of the things. Whatever serves this purpose of causal connections we call scientific truth, and every progress in the history of science has been a new success in changing the world of things over into a chain of effects and causes, which have reality merely in the abstraction of the scientist.

I know, my friend, that to-day you are not in the mood to follow such dry disputations, and yet if you take these few difficult steps with me, you will stand at once at a point where you see the whole field before you. Two consequences you can no longer avoid. Firstly, the truth of science does not

express the reality in which we live. Of course, it serves our real life, otherwise it were an empty fancy; and it is worked up from real experience, otherwise it were a dream. But it remains an artificial construction whose right and value do not go beyond the purpose for which it was fabricated. What a hopeless distortion, to magnify it into a philosophy and religion, and to ask science for the ultimate meaning of reality!

But more than that. You understand, secondly, that no science of the universe can say anything about ourselves, who make the sciences. Of course, if the scientist starts to transform the world of things into a system of enchained causes and effects, he must be consistent, and finally apply

the same tools of thought to his own personality. He must then consider himself as a body which works like a machine, and all his inner life as happenings in a special part of the machine, in the brain. All the ideas and imaginations, feelings and emotions, go on then in the brain just as it rains and snows in the outer world, and our own will is then the necessary product of its foregoing causes. Such consistency is admirable in its realm, but it must not make us forget that its realm is determined by our own decision, yes, that it is our own free will which decides for a certain purpose to conceive ourselves as bound, our will as a causal process. There is thus no conflict between the claim of science that we are mental mechanisms bound by

law and the claim of our self-consciousness that we are free personalities. In reality we are free, and in our freedom we have an interest in thinking of ourselves as mechanisms. In reality we are that which we know ourselves to be in our practical life, — subjects which take free attitudes, and not simply objects.

I see a bright response in your eyes, my friend, — am I right in supposing that your quick intelligence sees how everything else must follow from this central point? Do you grasp already the vital truth that our life is lived in time only so far as we see ourselves as such causal objects, but that it is beyond time in the reality of our immediate life? The personality which shapes the objects in its thought cre-

ates not only the conception of causality, but in that same act the form of time which is to embrace all causal processes of the world. Past, present, and future mean simply attitudes of the personality toward its objects. We call present the objects which we attend to, and future the objects which we are expecting as effects of the present ones, and past the objects which we conceive as causes of the present ones. But the personality which thus creates by its attitudes the idea of time as form of its objects is not itself banished into the prison of time. To ask what time the real personality itself fills is not more reasonable than to ask whether the will is round or square, how many pounds it weighs, and what its color may be. The real personality,

the subject of will and thought, is not an object in time, as it is itself the condition of time. Its whole reality lies in its attitudes and in its acts; it cannot be perceived like a thing, but must be understood in its meaning and aims; it cannot be explained by causality, but must be interpreted and appreciated; it cannot be measured, but must be valued; it is not in the world of things which we find, but in a world of actions and judgments which are performed. The meaning of our real personality is thus not to be a phenomenon for ourselves or others, but to be a will whose acts are valid for ourselves and demand the acknowledgment of others. Our personality reaches another directly —

But no, — I fear your approving

countenance means that you think I want to defend a mystical belief in telepathy or spiritualism. This time you misunderstand me utterly. Do you not see, my friend, that the mystic who craves for telepathic and similar wonders seeks the essence of our life still in the world of things in space and time? He hopes to overcome the limitations of that world of things by breaking the chain of causality, by making exceptions here and there, by linking together in a mysterious way objects which are far from one another in time and space. He does not see that we have projected our experiences into time and space just because we sought to bring order and law and causality into the chaos, and that we undo our own work if we destroy the order

which we created and allow mystery in place of strict causality. In the world of space and time there cannot be any exceptions to the laws of cause and effect, and a mystic event is simply an event which has not yet found its proper explanation.

When I said that we as personalities reach each other immediately, I did not mean that my thought as function of my brain — that is, as a process in the world of phenomena — jumps mysteriously over to your brain. I meant rather that if you and I are talking here absorbed in serious thought, we do not come in question for each other as scientifically constructed bodies in which some mental states succeed one another in time, but merely as real personalities which

try to understand one another. Our mutual interest forms a direct will-connection, and that has nothing to do with the causal connection which certainly exists between us if we care to consider ourselves as objects in the sphere of space and time. In that case, of course, our thoughts and our feelings are just passing phenomena which come in time one after the other; but in reality they are judgments, attitudes, volitions, which bind one another by their meaning, without relation to time and succession. Whether I think of myself and of my aim to awake your interest for the creed of philosophy, or whether I think of you and your aim to follow the paths of religious emotions, or whether I think of our common grief

and our common memory of our friend, — in every case, my experience is made up of acts which are bound together by the unity of purpose. The one act refers to the other, the one means the other, the one involves the other. If we are here in serious discussion, we do not play the explaining psychologist who asks what thought came by causal laws after what other thought, how many seconds the emotion lasted, how many minutes the development of the ideas, — no, you and I ask ourselves what your attitude toward life, what my view means, and how we agree and disagree ; how those intentions hang together in their ends, and how far one act binds us to accept the other. They follow from each other as the equations of the

mathematician follow from each other: how needless to ask in what time-order they are related! Has our talk here, has our whole life, any meaning if we seek its reality in such time-succession?

Do we not mean by time an order in which the reality of one member excludes the reality of all the other members? Only one time-instant is real, and the reality of the present excludes the reality of everything which precedes; the past must have become unreal when the present is real, and the existence of the present must have become unreal when the future will be real. Of course, the scientist needs this self-devouring time, for, as I said, time is to him the form of causality, and causality indeed demands that the

effect shall become real through the disappearance of the causes. As we scientists must think of the world of objects as a causal chain, we must conceive it as a world in time in which new and ever new existing objects follow one another just to disappear in the next instant into the past; that is, into irrevocable unreality. If we take ourselves and our friends as causal objects, then indeed nothing but the present instant of our existence has reality, while all our living and striving up to the present moment has been completely destroyed by having become a thing of the past. Our whole life has then become unreal at the moment of death, and then, of course, we must put all our desires into the hope for a future, near or far, in which some-

thing worth while shall become real again. Time has taken away and made unreal everything which gave value to our lives; no wonder that we look out to see whether time cannot bring us again a piece of reality after death or in a billion of years.

And yet, my friend, is there really any value whatever in such a life, short or long or endless, if we conceive it as such a mere series of phenomena in time? Is life worth living for two heart-beats long, if all that we experience in the first has become non-existent, and thus unreal, in the second? Is life still life if its contents follow as passive events, each one destroyed by the next, each one just passing by in a momentary existence? What can be gained if this meaningless procession of shadows is

to go on in us for a thousand times a thousand centuries? The mere extension in time cannot add any new value or dignity. It is not different from extension in space. If you were getting taller and taller, growing up to the highest mountain, stretching up to the moon, on to the farthest star, reaching with your arms around the whole physical universe, would that give you any new value? Would you not yearn for the narrow room where you might sit again, man with man, to fulfill your daily duties, as they alone give meaning to your life? A mere expansion, a more and more of phenomena in space and time, is a valueless amassing of indifferent and purposeless material.

How far otherwise if we emancipate

ourselves from this unnatural view and apperceive our life as act and not as object, as creator of time and not as a chance occurrence in time! As to this, my real personality, it is meaningless to ask myself what came before or what will come after it. The objects of my personality have the cause-relation and time-length, but my real personality itself has no causes and has no place in time. It does not fill more or less time, just as it is not more or less in weight; and nothing can come after it, just as there is nothing to its right or to its left. My life as a causal system of physical and psychical processes, which lies spread out in time between the dates of my birth and of my death, will come to an end with my last breath; to con-

tinue it, to make it go on till the earth falls into the sun, or a billion times longer, would be without any value, as that kind of life which is nothing but the mechanical occurrence of physiological and psychological phenomena had as such no ultimate value for me or for you or for any one at any time. But my real life as a system of interrelated will-attitudes has nothing before or after, because it is beyond time. It is independent of birth and death, because it cannot be related to the biological events; it is not born and will not die; it is immortal; all possible thinkable time is inclosed in it: it is eternal.

Again, I beg you not to think, here, of any mystical revelation. I do not speak of a visionary existence to which

we may lift ourselves in the inspiration of a holiday hour, and which is far removed from our daily humble life with its hardships and its pleasures. Metaphysical dreams and doubtful speculations cannot help us when we seek convictions on which we are to base all that is valuable in our life. The more we separate our life of idealistic belief from the practical reality between morning and evening, the more we deprive our daily life of its inner dignity and force it to the superficial hopes of an external hereafter. I certainly do not think, when I speak of our timeless will-life, of anything which is different from our practical doing in our quiet home or on the noisy market, in the circle of friends, or in the turmoil of the world. It is

the life which you and I live every day, and the only life of which the historians tell us. The question is thus not whether you are gifted with a wonderful intuition to grasp in yourself the hidden germ of a higher reality. No, you cannot live through any act of your life without knowing yourself as such a free and timeless agent. All our social and political life, our scientific and artistic endeavor, our law and religion, involves such freedom; and where acts are in question in their freedom, they are not looked at under the naturalistic aspect of causality. It was only this category of causality that forced them into the Procrustean bed of time.

Just this our good friend felt in his inmost heart, as he had the fullest and

finest understanding for the spirit of true history. I remember still every word of a fine talk which he and I had last June on a beautiful summer evening at the seashore. He had just been reading much of Buckle and Spencer and Comte and of the more modern positivists and sociologists. He had needed the material for an address he wanted to deliver on the task of the historian, and he came to me to talk it all over. Oh, he felt so wearied, he said, as if he had walked through a desert into which the flourishing landscape of history had been transformed. No doubt, he exclaimed, we can treat the whole world's history and the struggles of the nation and the development of individual great men as if it were all nothing but a big causal

mechanism, wherein everything is understood when it is explained, and wherein the natural factors of race disposition and climate, of market and food, determine fate. Of course, for certain purposes we must do so, and must demand of dry, stubborn laws that they express the richness of five thousand years of history. Then it is necessity which turns the crank of the historical machine to produce ever new repetitions. But all this is after all merely natural science: the spark of history is quenched.

To the eye of history man is not a thing which is moved, but a creator in freedom, and the whole world's history is a story of mutual will-influences. If I study history, I am doing it to understand what the will-

demands of living men mean. I stand before an endless manifoldness of political and legal and social and intellectual will-demands from the people with whom I come in contact. Each one compels acknowledgment, each one demands agreement or disagreement, obedience or combat, and my whole historical life is just the chain of my attitudes towards those will-demands. I have to respect the laws of my country, the political existence of other nations, the customs and convictions of my time; I have to choose between political parties and scientific theories and æsthetic schools and religious denominations; I have to sympathize with reforms and to fight crimes. And yet those individuals who represent the claims of the country or the

rights of other people or the theories of the schools have not invented the demands with which they approach me. Each one of their demands refers again to the demands of their predecessors and their ancestors. The whole historical configuration of our politics and law and science and art and religion is thus a system of will-demands which asks for our free decision, but which in itself points backward at every point to other subjects of will, and these others again refer to others. This whole mighty system of will-reference is what we call human history.

Thus we talked it over for hours, and it was a delight to listen to his enthusiasm for the thought of such men as Carlyle and Emerson, and

above all of the great Fichte, as he contrasted it with the positivistic superficiality which he had found in the sociological books. I remember well how he, late that night, left my piazza with the laughing words, "Believe me, from the pair in the Paradise of old to the eighty millions in our new Paradise, the world's history means the will-connections of free personalities."

I know his vivid harangue gave me much to think of, and I saw how his view of history was in full accord with my ideas of natural science. We seek in both cases to understand the reality to which we have to submit ourselves and towards which we take attitudes. Now this reality is twofold: we have objects and we have other

subjects in our world. The objects we must know because they are useful or harmful to us; and the subjects we must know because they approach us with their demands for agreement or disagreement. But if we really want to know what the objects are to us, we must find out what we have to expect from them, and we thus consider them as causes and effects. On the other hand, as to the subjects, if we want to understand them, we must find out what is involved in their demands. This does not mean that we ask for the facts which we have to expect; if we did so, we should be making things out of personalities. No, we want to find what is contained in a given proposition, political or legal, scientific or artistic, economic or religious. To

ask what is involved means, as our friend so rightly insisted, to ask what will-demands of other fellow-beings are approved or disapproved in this demand. Just as the naturalist passes from the given thing to ever new expected effects, so the student of personalities passes from the given demand to other and yet other subjects, whose will-demands were involved and acknowledged or thwarted in the present attitude. That leads him to ever new subjects, and that whole network of will-relations is history. But it is clear that we then come in question historically only in so far as we are such subjects of attitudes, and that all which we are doing in our economic or social, in our political or legal, in our æsthetic or scientific life is then

done in a form of existence which can be expressed only in terms of will.

If you say that you are an American or a Christian, an economic free-trader or an æsthetic realist, an admirer of Shakespeare or an adherent of Beethoven, a sympathizer with the Japanese or a leader of municipal reform, a student of Plato or a member of your Thursday Club, it is your daily, it is your hourly, life of which you give account, and yet each function is nothing else than the set of your will-attitudes in agreement or disagreement with will-tendencies of others who approach you with their demands for imitation and approval. Your whole practical existence thus continually resolves itself into new attitudes towards other centres of voli-

tion, and you are related then to Shakespeare or Plato not otherwise than to your friends in the Club. The whole meaning of your existence thus lies merely in will-relations which are to be understood and interpreted, but which have lost their significance when taken as causes and effects and thus treated as successive phenomena. If you agree or disagree with the latest act of the Russian Czar, the only significant relation which exists between him and you has nothing to do with the naturalistic fact that geographically an ocean lies between you, and if you are really a student of Plato, your only important relation to the Greek philosopher has nothing to do with the other naturalistic fact that biologically two thousand years lie between you.

Of course, if you want to describe and explain your connection with the Czar or with Plato, you must take account of those miles and of those calendar years which lie between. But for the historical meaning of this phase of your life, that aspect of description has no significance. That which the naturalist accounts for as spatial or temporal distance then becomes a characteristic distribution and order of will-influences. That Plato's life lies temporally far behind you means then for your real historical will that Plato makes demands on you, but that you do not make demands on Plato, and that you feel yourself influenced by a multitude of personalities which themselves show the influence of Plato.

It is thus not enough to say that

from the highest point of view thousands of years may be grasped in one act and may thus appear to us in inspired moments like one present experience in which the whole chain of successive temporal acts is perceived at once, just as in listening to music we may grasp at once in one span of consciousness the successive tones of the whole musical phrase. We should then see classical times and mediæval times and yesterday and to-day in one glance, just as we might see in a bird's-eye view the various places along a road over which we have wandered slowly. But no, in such a case each place still keeps its space-extension, and one lies beside the other, and just so each historical event would still keep its time-relation and its

place in a successive chain, even if we could look on all of them in one span of consciousness. The truth is, as I said, that they really have not any time-extension, and that they really do not come one after the other, and that thus, however many we may glance at together, we falsify their character in constructing them as such a temporal series. Their whole reality lies merely in their free agreement or disagreement with other will-attitudes, and fills as such neither a second nor a century. The practical life does not ask the question, how long a time or when our will shall go on, but merely the question what is to be affirmed and what is to be rejected. It has no duration and no predecessor and no successor, just as it has no corners and

no outlines, no taste and no smell; it has nothing but the purpose, and is thus in every phase timeless, without beginning and without end.

If you insist on metaphors, I should liken our will to a circle; a circle has no beginning and it has no end; it is endless, infinite. If you go forward in the circle, you land just where you came from; before and after are identical. Thus in our will-act the end which we try to reach, and which we expect as lying before us, must be given to us in advance, otherwise it were no will; and while we realize it, we appreciate it as our own purpose just because we started from this purpose. It is one act, the will-act, in which the purpose becomes real, and yet that which we aim at is identical

with that which we start from; the end which we expect as lying before us and the purpose from which we started as lying behind us must always be identical in every will: future and past coincide in the present will like the beginning and the end of the circle. And yet all this is merely a metaphor. It indicates merely that our idea of time is destroyed, future and past become identical as soon as we venture on the hopeless task of expressing the real meaning of will in the form of time. Then we do wiser to leave the field to psychology. The psychologist can really give us a temporal picture of the will, for he does not care to deal with the true historical man, but substitutes for him the organism and its functions, and offers

us instead of the will the actions of the organism and its accompaniments among the mental phenomena. Then the will becomes of course a describable and explainable series of successive events of which each one takes its little time. But, my friend, the meaning is gone, the value of the will evaporates, it is not really any longer the will which we are willing, it is nothing but the will which we are perceiving, like the snowflakes there outside of the window pane.

You ask what is, then, after all, the value of such a real life? Even if it is independent of time, why is its eternal timeless reality more valuable than the passing events in the physical world of objects? What, then, does value mean? I do not hesitate to reply that your

question itself gives you the answer. You ask your question for the purpose of finding the truth, — what does it mean to find truth? Is truth merely an idea glowing for an instant in your mind like the sparks here in the fireplace before us? No, you seek truth in your questioning because the truth of the idea means that you respect it, that you feel the truth as something which is an end in itself, something which is absolute, something which demands submission. It does not allow any further question as to whether or not it is useful for something else, but it is itself the end of all questioning. Only that which is such an ultimate end for us is really a value. Yet truth is certainly not the only value to which we submit our will. The com-

plete perfection of the beautiful, the moral deed, the intellectual achievement, the work of civilization, the religious faith, the repose of philosophical conviction, — each is such an end in itself, which we respect as final. But the fact that truth and beauty, morality and culture, religion and philosophy demand our submission, that we respect them as something which needs no further purpose, means that they are more than our individual personal experiences. They satisfy our own will, but we then know our will as at the same time more than an individual volition; our own will-acts are to us then expressions of an absolute will.

Again, my friend, I beg you not to mistake me as speaking of a holiday world which condemns all that we en-

joy and attributes value with puritanical austerity merely to that which demands the self-denial of our whole personality and the suppression of our instincts. Nothing lies farther from my mind. The absolute values are, as I said, certainly not confined to our own actions. The simplest beautiful ornament has its perfection, the simplest mathematical equation has its validity, the least progress of civilization is an achievement, and all love and friendship has its complete value. Our whole world is thus overspun with values which have in themselves nothing to do with our actions and simply demand our faithful assent. That truth is more valuable than error, that beauty is more valuable than vulgarity, that harmony of souls is more valuable than

discord, that civilized life is better than savagery, all this stands independent of the further value of the honest action as over against the dishonest one. Of course the value of our action is linked with all those other values of the world inasmuch as it is a demand of morality that whenever we are acting we shall create values. Whenever we think, we ought to think the truth, whenever we choose, we ought to prefer the perfect and the beautiful, we ought to secure harmony and happiness and progress. But at first we must have faith in all those values before we can acknowledge them as goals of our moral action.

It seems as if there were a chaos of values, and yet I do not think that it is out of the question to bring order

into that abundance of absolute aims. You know I am not a philosopher, and I should not dare to play the rôle of the systematic metaphysician, and yet I cannot help here, too, having my own thoughts. I think there are four large groups of values which refer to the four fundamental attitudes of our will towards the world. We submit ourselves to the world, or we approve the world, or we demand a change in the world, or we demand something beyond the world. Of course we can do that from our merely individual standpoint; you or I may approve the given thing as we like it and as its taste pleases us, but that is nothing more than a sensual enjoyment; and we may approve a certain change because it is useful for our

personal profit; or we may go beyond our experience in a personal superstition. On such paths, of course, there lies no absolute value. You or I, on the other hand, might submit or approve or believe with the meaning that this act of ours is not for us as individuals here in these chairs and before this fireplace; that it belongs to every personality with whom we can share at all our world of thought and feeling and will, that every one ought to submit and to enjoy and to approve and to accept what our will aims at. Then the purpose of our will takes indeed the character of an absolute value and that to which we submit then means for us the absolute validity of knowledge, and that which we approve as it is given means the absolute per-

fection of harmony and beauty, and that which we approve as change means the achievement of morality and law and civilization, and that which we believe in gives the absolute completeness of religion and philosophy.

Well, all this sounds musty and abstract, and this hour is not the time to show to you how in my deepest thoughts all those scattered values hang together. For indeed I do think that they are all expressions of the same principle. Over-individual value is given to our will in everything which we can acknowledge as identical with itself. Our causal knowledge seeks identities of cause and effect, our historical knowledge seeks identities of aims, our logical knowledge seeks identities of propositions; in

sympathy we have identities of desire, in art we have identity between the whole and the part, in progress we have identity between the purpose and the realization, in morality we have identity between will and action, in religion we have identity between the world and its superstructure, in philosophy we seek the identity between the world and its substructure; in short, wherever we posit something identical, there we find an ultimate end, something in which our will rests, something which has, therefore, absolute value. And why does our will rest in identity, and can never rest until it finds identity? Certainly because that is the very meaning of will itself. The identity of purpose and realization expresses the whole signifi-

cance of the will, and as we are will, only identity in the world can have for us absolute value.

I beg your pardon, my friend; my thoughts have ranged too far. I was grasping for deeper problems which lie beyond the simple hour of serious talk. Your thoughts have left me in my solitary wandering and have gone back to the dear memory of our friend; but pray mark that which is after all alone important to me, that nothing has value for us, that there is no truth and no perfection and no progress and no eternity but in that world which is given to our will and in which we ourselves are will; that all values are lost forever when our actuality is eliminated, when we become the passive spectator of the world, and the world

itself thus becomes a series of objective phenomena.

In our temporal, causal world there is not, and there cannot be, anything of real value, because everything comes to view as the cause of something else, and nothing is an end in itself. The clay may be valuable because you can make bricks from it; and those bricks valuable because you can make houses from them; and the houses valuable because they protect the human body; and the human body is valuable because it preserves the nation; and the nation is valuable because it preserves the human race; and the human race is valuable — why, I do not know. In that temporal order of things that human race may fall into the sun, or a comet may overturn the whole earth,

— why are the atoms of the universe not just as good if they go on without that swarming humanity on the surface of the earth-planet; why was the earth not just as good before that surface protoplasm grew into human shape? Who has the right to say that one combination of atoms is better than another? — it perhaps produces a special effect, but why is that effect better than another? In that temporal world there is no good and bad, no value and no ideal, but merely a change in complication. If people carelessly speak of development, they really mean a change to greater and greater differentiation; but the end of the so-called development is not better than the beginning, as in that world nothing is valuable in itself.

Values are found merely in the world of subjects. But there values have reality, because our will assumes attitudes in which ultimate ends are acknowledged and respected, — they are good in themselves, they are absolute values, they give to life that which makes it worth living: and these subjects and their acts are real outside of causality and time, valid in the world of eternity.

And now, my friend, speak for yourself: What can you and what can I desire for ourselves and for our children as the fulfillment of our warmest hopes? Those absolute values of truth and morality, of beauty and completeness, are over-personal ideals; but what can we desire for ourselves as individual personalities? If we are really

will, and thus outside of time, there is no longer any meaning in the desire for a protracted duration, this one hope in which the open and the masked materialists find themselves together. The only longing which can be a personal desire of the real subject must speak again the language of the will and not that of phenomena. A will can never strive for more space and time, but only for more significance and influence and value and satisfaction. Our will is significant if it involves and absorbs as much of the will-attitudes of others as possible; it has influence if its demands determine the free-will decisions of others, and it has value if it realizes through itself the over-individual absolute values, that is, if it creates truth and beauty, hap-

piness and progress, law and morality and religion. And the significance and the influence and the value of our will are finally held together by our longing for complete satisfaction, which is, after all, but another name for the perfect harmony of all our will-actions. No endless duration is our goal, but complete repose in the perfect satisfaction which the will finds when it has reached the significance, the influence, and the value at which it is aiming.

This aim itself is different for every one of us, and it is just this difference which gives us our personal practical individuality. Each one aims toward significance by responding to particular influences. They may come to us through friends or through books,

through the customs of our nation or through the nature which surrounds us, through church and state, through school and family. And each one himself again aims at particular influences. No one desires to control with his will state and art, science and law, music and technique, his country and the antipodes, his generation and the thousandth generation after his. You are this man just because you confine yourself to will this work and not to do God's work all over the world; and every one aims towards particular actual values, and lives to his own chosen ideals. But no life would mean to us the life of a personality in which the will does not aim towards some significance, towards some influence, towards some value, and finally to-

wards the happiness of complete satisfaction in the harmonization of his aims and of his experience. You have never wished anything else for yourself, you cannot have wished anything else for our friend.

Each one of us is more than merely an individual. The norms of the good and the beautiful and the true and the religious are our own deepest aims and attitudes, but we will them not as individuals. They are our will-acts only in so far as we are absolute subjects, in so far as our consciousness is the over-individual consciousness, the oversoul. Its will-attitudes working in us determine the constitution and the meaning and the value of the world which we as individuals find as given to us, and to whose laws and obliga-

tions we as personalities have to submit. In so far as we are such oversoul, our aim can never find complete satisfaction in any finite experience. Its completeness of realization lies in the absolute totality of the world, to which every individual belongs through its particular intentions, but whose realization endlessly transcends the aims of any individual. The self-realization of our oversoul can thus never be our desire as practical individuals, and no disappointment and no sadness belongs to the fate of the individual in failing to complete in itself the aims of the over-individual will. If that were the aim of the personality, it would flow over into the absolute and would lose every meaning of individuality. For us in so far as you and

I are not the same, as we are not the one absolute Oversoul, but are different and unique, all our desires have thus a meaning only when they refer to those will-attitudes in us which have the particular limited historical affiliations.

Outside of time, and thus eternal, is our individual will no less than our oversoul will; but while our absolute personality can find harmonization of its aims merely in the totality of the world, our individual personality never seeks and never longs for another complete set of facts than through the significance, the influence, and the value which belong to the particular historical situation. A personality which has found complete satisfaction of its aims has no possible further intention, and

it would be meaningless to attach to it externally a supplement of individual existence. The life which we live in the world of eternity has no possible other measure than that of its significance, its influence, and its value. If in those directions the aim is fulfilled, our life-work is so completed that we should become disloyal to ourselves and should deny the meaning of our particular individuality if we were aiming towards influences which do not belong to us and towards a significance to which we have no right; in short, if we demand more than this, our particular life.

In this sense we have not even the right to translate the hope for individual endless duration from the sphere of phenomena into the sphere

of will-relations. In the sphere of phenomena it deprived our life of every meaning and value. If we were to substitute for that empty thought of a continuation of time the deeper thought of an endless personal influence of will, endless not in time but endless in personal relations, it would seem as if we had really expressed an ultimate goal. Something like this gave life to the old ideas of the transmigration of souls, but even that uncanny thought mostly took the form that each new life of the old soul was conceived as beginning anew, not knowing anything of its own past and thus without any inner unity and without any consciousness of continuous personality. The very thought of this break in recollection expresses clearly

that we are no longer personalities if our individuality is not limited. If it seriously hopes for an unlimited expansion of its will-influence and its will-significance, the individual would completely transform itself into the over-individual absolute; our oversoul would throw off our historically given personality, and you and I would not mourn here for our friend if we believed that he and you and I are nothing but the one same absolute Oversoul. Our limitation makes us individuals and gives meaning to our particular striving. All hopes which guide us from the cradle to the grave can refer merely to the complete harmonization of our aims for our limited significance, our limited influence, and our limited realization of values. With

that work completed or uncompleted we stand in eternity.

And yet who dares to speak the word "uncompleted"? Are the influences of our will confined to those impulses which work directly and with our knowledge on the nearest circle of our neighbors? Will not our friend, who left us in the best energy of his manhood, influence you and me and so many others throughout our lives, and what we gained from his noble mind — will it not work through us further and further, and may it not thus complete much of that which seemed broken off so uncompleted? And yet who dares to speak the word "completed"? Do not our purposes grow, does not in a certain sense every new significance which our will reaches aim

towards new influences, does not every newly created value give us the desire for further achievement, is our particular will really ever completely harmonized? Is our life work really ever so completely done that no desire has still a meaning? And yet does not even that thought, with all its individual sadness of discord, add to the significance and to the value of our eternal being?

In eternity lies the reality of our friend, who will never sit with us again here at the fireplace. I do not think that I should love him better if I hoped that he might be somewhere waiting through space and time to meet us again. I feel that I should then take his existence in the space-time world as the real meaning of his

life, and thus deprive his noble personality of every value and of every ideal meaning. The man we love was not in space and time; he fought his life of strife and achievement as a subject which calls not for our perception with its standards of causality, space, and time, but for our interpretation with its standards of agreement, of values, of ideals. We know him as a subject of his will, and thus as a perfect part of the real world in its eternal fitness of valid values. He lived his life in realizing absolute values through his devotion to truth and beauty, to morality and religion. You and I do not know a reality of which he is not in eternity a noble part; the passing of time cannot make his personality unreal, and nothing would be

added to his immortal value if some object like him were to enter the sphere of time again. The man whom we love belongs to a world in which there is no past and future, but an eternal now. He is linked to it by the will of you, of me, of all whose will has been influenced by his will, and he is bound to it by his respect for absolute values. In a painting every color is related to the neighboring colors, and it belongs at the same time to the totality of the picture; in the symphony every tone is related to the nearest tones, and yet belongs to the whole symphony. But when the symphony or the painting is perfect, then most of all we do not wish the one beautiful color to sweep over the whole picture, or the one splendid tone to

last through the whole music. We do not desire the tone of this individual life to last beyond its internal, eternal rôle, throughout the symphony of the Absolute; its immortality is its perfect belonging to that whole timeless reality, belonging there through its human relations to its neighbors, and through its ideal relations to the ultimate values.

See, even these ashes of the wood which burns in the fireplace are made up of atoms which will last throughout all future time; I do not long for that repulsive, intolerable endlessness which we should have to share with those ashes. They are in time, and can never escape the tracks of time, and however long they may last, there will be endless time still ahead of them. We are beyond time; our hope and

our strife is eternally completed in the timeless system of wills, and if I mourn for our friend, I grieve, not because his personality has become unreal like an event in time, but because his personality as it belongs eternally to our world aims at a fuller realization of its intentions, at a richer influence on his friends. This contrast between what is aimed at in our attitude and what is reached in our influence is indeed full of pathos, and yet inexhaustible in its eternal value. We ought to submit to its ethical meaning as we submit to the value of truth and beauty and duty and sanctity. It belongs to the ultimate meaning of each of us; through our aims, through our influences, through our relations to the aims of our fellows and to the ideals of the

Absolute, and, finally, through these pathetic contrasts between aims and influences we enter as parts into the absolute reality, — not for calendar years and not for innumerable æons, but for timeless eternity.

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